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ABSTRACT

The eighth in a series of studies investigating the educational context and outcomes for high school students with disabilities (SWDs), this study examined parents' perceptions of the educational program of their children with disabilities. Ten parents of students with disabilities participated in focus groups and provided their ideas and opinions in relation to five major questions. Parents also completed a survey that explored satisfaction with both special education and required academic courses and teachers. During the focus group meetings, parents reported school systems often seemed unfriendly and unresponsive to the needs of students with disabilities and that little differentiation of instruction was evident to assure quality of education for their students. Parents were interested in having their children acquire self-esteem, practical skills, and learning strategies. They wanted more and varied help for their students and more efficient communication about their students. They valued the special education services and classes. In general, urban parents indicated greater satisfaction on the surveys than did rural and suburban parents. Urban parents' mean ratings ranged between 5.1 and 5.9 on a 7-point scale; rural parents' ratings ranged between 2.6 and 5.4; and suburban parents' ratings ranged between 3.3 and 5.4. Data charts are included. (Author/CR)

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Research Report #8

The educational context and outcomes for high school students with disabilities: The perceptions of parents of students with disabilities

Janis A. Bulgren

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Abstract

A significant topic of interest to educational researchers is how satisfied consumers are with educational programs. The views of parents of students with disabilities are of particular interest as researchers and educators explore ways to enhance the success of these students in inclusive general education classes. Ten parents of students with disabilities participated in focus groups in this study to provide their ideas and opinions in relation to five major questions. Parents also completed a satisfaction survey exploring satisfaction with both special education and required academic courses and the teachers in each.

During the focus groups meetings, parents reported that the school systems often seemed unfriendly and unresponsive to the needs of students with disabilities and that little differentiation of instruction was evident to assure quality of education for their students. Parents were interested in having their children acquire self-esteem, practical skills and learning strategies. They wanted more and varied help for their students and more efficient communications about their students, and they valued the special education services and classes. In general, on the satisfaction surveys, urban parents indicated greater satisfaction than did rural and suburban parents with most of the aspects included in all six sections of the satisfaction form. Urban parents' mean ratings in the sections ranged between 5.1 and 5.9 on a seven-point scale; rural parents' mean ratings ranged between 2.6 and 5.4; and suburban parents' mean ratings ranged between 3.3 and 5.4.

A significant topic of interest to educational researchers is how satisfied consumers are with educational programs. The views of parents of students with disabilities are of particular interest as researchers and educators explore ways to include these students to greater and greater degrees in inclusive general education classes. This is particularly important since the reauthorization of IDEA, which provides assurances that parents will be informed of and involved with decisions about their children's education. In addition, parents are a rich source of feedback on goals for students with disabilities and ways that schools are responding to the needs of these students. Therefore, information from both focus groups and surveys was collected from parents to determine how satisfied they are that general and special education services help to meet expectations and hopes for their students.

Methods

Subjects and Settings

Parents of students with disabilities were recruited from three schools to participate in focus groups. A total of ten parents, five from an urban school, three from a rural school, and two from a suburban school, participated. Researchers met with parents from the urban school in a public library close to the school after school hours, with parents from the rural school in a conference room adjacent to the office, and with parents in the suburban school in a small classroom that was configured like a conference room. These parents were also asked to respond to a parent satisfaction survey. All ten parents returned these forms.

Measures

Focus group questions. Focus group questions were the following: 1) What do you consider to be the greatest challenge that your son/daughter faces in being successful in high school? 2) What do you expect your son/daughter to receive as a result of his/her high school education? 3) What are your expectations for the nature of special education services provided to your son/daughter in high school? 4) What kinds of skills/strategies do your son/daughter most need? 5) What guidance would you give us as we design interventions?

Parent satisfaction survey. A satisfaction survey was developed on which parents indicated on a 7-point Likert-type scale how satisfied they were with aspects of their child's education. The scale ranged from "1" representing "Completely dissatisfied" to "7" representing "Completely satisfied" with an eighth column labeled "Can't answer." There were 54 items on the questionnaire. Mean ratings were calculated for each item for parents of students attending the urban, suburban, and rural schools. Mean ratings were also calculated for each item across all the participating parents.

Parents were first asked to indicate their satisfaction with the way their child's special education teachers: (a) involve the child in making decisions about his/her education; (b) involve

the parent in making decisions about the child's education; (c) help the child plan what required academic classes to take; (d) meet the child's needs as a learner; (e) teach the child the skills and strategies needed to succeed in required academic courses; (f) help the child set and reach goals; (g) tell the child what he/she has done well; (h) tell the child what he/she needs to do to improve; (i) help the child complete assignments for required academic classes; (j) help the child study for tests in required academic classes; (k) help the child earn good grades (Cs or above); (l) help the child deal with personal problems; (m) help the child deal with problems in required academic classes; (n) show concern about the child as a person; (o) prepare every day to teach the child; and (p) choose books and materials that help the child learn.

Second, parents were asked to indicate their experiences with their child's teachers of required academic classes and special education teacher and how satisfied they were with the following: (a) the way the child's teachers report the child's progress in required academic classes to the parent; (b) the frequency of the reports they receive from the teachers of the required classes; (c) the information that the teachers report to the parent about the child; and (d) the cooperation between the child's teachers and the parents. (Questions regarding teachers of required academic classes were labeled 2aa through 2ad). As a follow-up, parents were asked the same questions about their satisfaction with their child's special education teachers. (Questions regarding special education teachers were labeled 2ba through 2bd).

Third, parents were asked to indicate their satisfaction with the way the child's special education teachers helped the child prepare for life after high-school graduation and how satisfied they were with the way teachers: (a) teach the child new skills and strategies that would help him/her do well in future schooling; (b) teach the child new skills and strategies that would help him/her do well in future jobs; (c) help the child think about jobs or career choices when he/she finishes high school; (d) help the child think about future training or education when he/she finishes high school; and (e) help the child be ready to be a "life-long learner."

Fourth, parents were asked to indicate their satisfaction with the way that the teachers of required academic classes (a) consider the child's learning needs; (b) prepare for class in a manner that enhances the child's performance; (c) teach in a manner that enhances the child's performance; (d) choose books and materials that enhance the child's performance; (e) change their instruction in a manner that helps the child learn; (f) use computers or other machines to help the child learn; (g) help the child with personal problems; (h) help the child with problems that he/she is having in classes; and (i) show concern for the child as a person.

Fifth, parents were asked to consider their child's participation in required academic courses and to indicate how satisfied they were with (a) the child's attitude about learning in those classes; (b) the child's comfort in those classes; (c) the child's acceptance by the other students in the classes; (d) the success of the child in learning new information in those classes;

(e) the success of the child in learning new skills in those classes; (f) the gains the child was making as a learner; (g) the grades the child was earning in those classes; (h) the progress that the child was making toward meeting state standards; and (i) the progress that the child was making toward graduation.

Sixth, parents were asked to consider their relationship with the school staff and how satisfied they were with (a) that they knew with whom to talk if their son/daughter had a school problem; (b) that they knew what to say and do if their son/daughter had a school problem; c) with their comfort level in talking with school staff about their son/daughter; d) that something positive and effective would be done if they brought a problem to the staff's attention; e) that the school staff would treat them with respect and seriously listen to their concerns; and f) that they could help their son/daughter succeed in school by working with school staff.

After these six sets of questions were asked, parents were asked a final question to explore how much they agreed that they personally had become an advocate for their son/daughter on educational issues.

Procedures

Parents were recruited with the help of a school liaison in each school. Each parent was paid $25 to participate in a focus group and $5 to complete the questionnaire. Two researchers met with each group of parents at the designated site. Sessions lasted approximately 90 minutes. The study was described to the parents, and questions were answered. Then, the focus group questions were posed by researchers and answered by parents in a discussion format. At the conclusion of the discussion, parents were asked to fill out the Parent Satisfaction Survey.

Results

Focus Group Results

Results for question 1: When parents were asked to tell about the challenges their child faced in secondary education, a common comment related to a lack of communication and efficiency within the infrastructure of the entire school system. Parents mentioned that general education teachers were not always aware of what was in an IEP for their student, and this seemed to be caused or exacerbated by the fact that there seemed to be little coordination or cooperation between special education and general education teachers. This was the first mention of a recurring emphasis on the need for system change.

In fact, parents in two schools (one urban, one rural) commented on inefficiencies in the *school system*. For example, urban parents reported a time when the school computer went down, and all the schedules were lost. The school was forced to make all new schedules. Parents reported that this was frustrating and upsetting for the students. Urban parents also noted that when students were placed in a class in which they did not belong or in which they were not

scheduled, making the correction took too long. This happened, for example, when a school moved to a new model of student placement, called the academy model. Urban parents also cited too many class interruptions, resulting in inadequate time for teachers to teach. At the time, the urban school was using a block scheduling system with ninety-minute classes.

The urban parents who volunteered to participate in the focus group appeared to be very strong advocates for their children in maintaining student records, personally taking records to new schools when the family moved, and setting up meetings with teachers to let them know that their students had a disability. With regard to the rural school, parents spoke about the insensitivity of the system where changes in the routine (e.g., the use of student teachers, for example) were hard for their students to handle.

Parents commented on a *lack of differentiation* in the curriculum and in instruction. They provided examples: many teachers offered little or no additional or different materials to help their students with disabilities learn; no differences in class pace were noted; instruction was not adapted; and some teachers did not make accommodations often enough even when there were specific accommodations named in the IEP. An example they provided of an accommodation that was not heeded by teachers was providing more time to take tests. Rural parents also suggested that general education teachers did not heed accommodation requests made by special education teachers.

Another common response, which appeared in all three focus groups, related to *class climate*. Parents mentioned that students were afraid to ask for help or make a mistake in front of the other students. In even more strongly worded statements regarding class climate, suburban parents said that their students were not as embarrassed to ask questions in special education classes as in general education classes.

Interestingly, the parents suggested that, in some cases, there should be special, separate classes for those courses in which students were having particular problems. They said students would have a better opportunity to bond being in classes with others experiencing similar problems. Rural parents were the most emphatic. They said that some general education teachers ignored special education students or thought they were lazy. They said there was a lack of praise or respect from general education teachers. One parent said that self-contained classes could still be valuable in today's educational system and that mainstreaming was not always best. Another indicated that she was not in favor of mainstreaming because students needed more individualized attention.

Parents of students enrolled in the urban and suburban schools brought up the issue of lack of *quality education*; they specifically mentioned as challenges the skills that their students had <u>not</u> been taught. Urban parents noted that the skills that the students were taught in reading

and math at the elementary and middle school levels were not adequate. Suburban parents mentioned that students were not taught to take notes.

In addition, there were some issues mentioned in just one focus group. For example, suburban parents mentioned large class sizes as a challenge, as well as the problem of students not taking responsibility for homework. Parents in the rural area indicated that they believed curriculum and behavior standards were too high for their students.

Results for question 2. When the parents were asked to think about expectations they had for their child, parents in all three schools mentioned good self-esteem as something they expected their children to get out of the high-school experience. A suburban parent said that, ideally, students should learn that the definition of learning disability is "learning differently." Both suburban and urban parents mentioned that they hoped their children would learn self-advocacy skills. Urban and rural parents mentioned that they hoped their children would create friendships and participate in sports in high school because these activities tend to keep kids out of trouble and motivate them to achieve. An urban parent illustrated this by sharing that an older son, who did not have the benefit of being on a sports team, was in the "wrong crowd" and ended up on drugs. Suburban parents mentioned the importance of learning in high school how to be self-motivated.

Second, in terms of preparation for the future, rural parents specifically mentioned that, as a result of a high-school education, students should learn practical life skills and be able to cope, stay out of trouble, earn a high-school diploma, and get a decent job. Urban parents mentioned the importance of computer training in high school and receiving training to make something of one's life. A couple of urban parents mentioned that they wanted their students to be prepared to go to college. However, rural parents stated that they wished teachers would stop giving their children unrealistic expectations about going to college.

Results for question 3. When parents were asked about the nature of special services provided by the school, parents in the three focus groups stated that their expectation was that students would get extra help in some form or other through these services. Both urban and rural parents mentioned that they would like to see more peer tutoring or peer helpers. Among the individual groups, urban parents suggested after-school programs; suburban parents mentioned tutoring; and rural parents suggested year-round school or using the resource room more for support.

System change was again mentioned in the responses to this question, as it was earlier when parents discussed the greatest challenges facing their students. Specifically, suburban parents mentioned the need for more communication between teachers and parents, proper resources for special education teachers, and making sure regular education teachers have a copy of the student's IEP, with features most pertinent to their classes highlighted.

Urban parents were particularly vocal on this topic of system change. They said the school was 20 years behind the times. They reported that their students thought classes were boring. Urban parents suggested offering reading programs so that students would learn reading skills and build their self-esteem. They recommended letting students read what is interesting to them, letting them do real-life, hands-on projects, and offering more computer skills classes. The parents commented that there were too few computers, and the computers the school had were outdated.

Results for question 4. When they were asked about the skills or strategies their child needed, the parents in all three groups mentioned that their students needed skills and strategies, but no particular skill was mentioned across all of the groups. Suburban and rural parents mentioned that note taking was a needed skill. The following skills/strategies were each mentioned by only one group: suburban parents mentioned test taking; rural parents mentioned living skills; and urban parents mentioned self-management skills, goal setting skills, computer skills, reading skills, and math skills, with an emphasis on hands-on projects and real-life experiences.

Results for question 5. When the parents were asked to make suggestions regarding direction and guidance to help their child succeed, they made some suggestions regarding the timing for introducing interventions to help their children. Rural parents suggested that educators should not wait until high school to teach students learning strategies, but rather, the strategies should be taught beginning in grade school. Suburban parents also suggested that learning strategies should be taught earlier in the educational system, well before high school. They specifically suggested that study skills and test taking skills be taught earlier. In addition, they suggested that learning strategies instruction needed to be incorporated into what the students were already doing in "problem classes," that is, classes that are difficult or pose problems for students.

In addition, the urban parents suggested more projects and more hands-on experiences rather than worksheets. They also had a strong interest in computer skills instruction. The urban parents said that perhaps putting strategies instruction on a computer disc would interest students.

Parent Satisfaction Form Results

The parent satisfaction forms consisted of six sets of questions with a final seventh question requiring only a single response. These questions are described in the methods section. Question 1 asked parents to rate their satisfaction with the special education teachers' instruction and interactions with their child (see Figures 1 and 2). Question 2 focused on the parents' own experiences with their child's teachers of required academic classes (in Part A) and special education teachers (in Part B) (see Figure 3). Question 3 targeted parents' satisfaction with the

way the special education teachers are helping their child prepare for life after high school graduation (see Figure 4). Question 4 dealt with parents' satisfaction with instruction from teachers of required academic classes and those teachers' interactions with their child (see Figure 5). In Question 5, parents' satisfaction with their child's participation in required academic classes was explored (see Figure 6), and in Section 6, parents' satisfaction with their relationship with the school staff was explored (see Figure 7). In addition, Question 7 explored parental involvement as an advocate for their student on educational issues (see Figure 8).

Compared to the rural and suburban parents, parents of urban students indicated the greatest degree of satisfaction for each section of the satisfaction form. Mean ratings from urban parents ranged from "5.4" for the section (Section 5) that focused on parent satisfaction with the child's participation in required academic classes to "5.9" for Section 2A, which asked about satisfaction regarding parents' experiences with the child's teachers of the required academic classes. Two sections received a mean rating of "5.8": Section 1, which focused on the special education teacher's instruction and interaction with the child; and Section 6, which focused on the parent's relationship with the school staff.

For parents of urban students, twelve individual items received an average rating of "6" or higher. These were items that explored whether parents were satisfied with the way their child's teachers involve the child in making decisions about his/her education; involve the parent in making decisions about the child's education; help the child plan what required academic classes to take; meet the child's needs as a learner; teach the child the skills and strategies needed to succeed in required academic courses; tell the child what he/she has done well; tell the child what he/she needs to do to improve; report the child's progress to parents in non-required academic courses; and help the child think about future training or education when he/she finishes high school. These items also explored parent satisfaction with the cooperation between the child' teachers and the parent; their child's acceptance by the other students in required academic classes; and whether something positive and effective would be done if the parent brought a problem to the staff's attention. For urban parents, no individual items were awarded a mean score below "3," indicating that they were neither dissatisfied nor completely dissatisfied with any of the aspects named on the form.

Parents of rural students indicated less satisfaction than did urban parents, with at least one question in three of the six sections receiving a mean rating of "3.0" or below. The rural parents were least satisfied with items in Section 5 (which asked about the child's participation in the required academic classes) as indicated with a mean rating of "2.6" and with items in Section 4 as indicated with a mean rating of 2.8. Section 4 targeted parent satisfaction with teachers of the child's academic classes and the way they taught and interacted with the child. Rural parents were more satisfied with their relationship with the school staff, the topic targeted

in Section 6. This section received a mean rating of "5.4," the highest given for any section by rural parents.

For rural parents, six individual items received an average rating of "6" or higher. These were items that explored whether parents were satisfied with the way their child's teachers involve the parent in making decisions about the child's education; with the way their child's teachers help the child plan what required academic classes to take; with the way their child's teachers meet the child's needs as a learner; with the way their child's teachers tell the child that he/she has done well; that they know with whom to talk if their son/daughter has a school problem; that they know what to say and do if their son/daughter has a school problem; and that they could help their son/daughter succeed in school by working with the school staff. However, rural parents awarded a mean rating below "3" for the following eleven individual items which related to satisfaction about: the way their child's teachers change their instruction in a manner that helps the child learn; the teachers' use of computers or other machines to help the child learn; the way the teachers help the child with personal problems; the way the teachers help the child with problems that he/she is having in their classes; the child's attitude about learning in the required classes; the child's comfort in required classes, the success of their child in learning new information in those classes; the success of their child in learning new skills in those classes; the grades their child was earning in those classes; the progress that their child was making toward meeting state standards; and the progress that their child was making toward graduation

Parents of suburban students also indicated less overall satisfaction that did the urban parents, with at least one question in four of the six sections receiving a mean rating of "3.0" or below. Suburban parents indicated the least satisfaction with items in Section 4 (with a mean rating of "3.3") and items in Part A of Section 2 (with a mean rating of "3.4"). Section 4 focused on parent satisfaction with the instruction and teacher/student interaction from teachers of academic classes. Part A of Section 2 dealt with parents' satisfaction with their own experience with the child's teachers of required academic classes. Mean ratings were higher for Section 3 (with each item in this section receiving a mean rating of "5.0") and Section 6 (receiving a mean rating of "5.4," the highest given for any section by suburban parents). Items in Section 3 dealt with parent satisfaction with the way the child's special education teachers helped the child prepare for life after high school graduation. Items in Section 6 asked about parent satisfaction with their relationship with the school staff.

Suburban parents awarded a rating of "6.0" to two individual items in this section: that they would know with whom to talk if their son/daughter has a school problem and that they know what to say and do if their son/daughter has a school problem. Only one other individual item on the satisfaction form received a mean rating of "6.0" or above from suburban parents. This item, from Section 5, received a mean rating of "7.0" and indicated the parents' satisfaction

that their child was accepted by other students in required academic classes. For suburban parents, the following three individual items received mean scores below "3": that their child's teachers met their child's needs as a learner, that their teachers helped their child complete assignments for required academic classes, and that the teachers helped their child earn grades of "C" or above.

Regarding parental advocacy on the part of their students, urban parents indicated more involvement ad advocates (mean of 5.8) followed by suburban (mean of 5.5) and rural (mean of 5.0).

When the responses of all parents in all three schools are combined, no items received average ratings below "3." Only three items received average scores of "6." These were how satisfied parents were that they were involved in making decisions about their child's education, how satisfied they were that their child's teachers told the child he or she had done well, and that they knew with whom to talk if their son or daughter had a school problem.

Discussion

In conclusion, parents had both concerns and expectations associated with their students' educational experiences. First, during the focus group meetings, parents expressed concern about communication and efficiency within the entire infrastructure of the school system; this was particularly true for the responses related to students with disabilities included in general education classes. Second, parents provided important insights regarding their hopes and expectations for their children with disabilities and responses that school personnel can make to enhance the educational results for their students.

In general, regarding communication and efficiency within the infrastructure of schools, parents reported that their students' school was not as responsive to the needs of students with disabilities as the parents would like. They cited little coordination or cooperation among special and general education teachers, exemplified by little awareness of students' Individualized Education Programs on the part of general education teachers. In addition, some parents noted a lack of overall efficiency in assigning students to classes or correcting incorrect placement in classes, frequent class-time interruptions, and interruptions in the flow of instruction caused by changes in the classroom such as the use of student teachers.

Regarding responses to students with disabilities in the general education classroom, parents reported that few adaptations or accommodations were made to help their students in general education classes, that they were often ignored or considered lazy, and that students were less likely to ask questions in general education classes than special education classes for fear of being embarrassed.

Regarding parental hopes and expectations for their students, parents mentioned that they wanted their students to leave school with social competence and the academic skills that would

allow them to function in future educational or employment settings. In terms of social competence, parents specifically mentioned that they hoped their children would learn self-advocacy skills, become self motivated, and have positive peer associations. Relative to their children's futures, parents wanted students to get a diploma, to learn practical life skills, including computer training, and ultimately, to be employed in a good job.

Regarding responses that schools could make to enhance the educational results for their students, parent suggestions included the following: special education teachers should provide more help for their students; students should be taught how to learn through learning skills and strategies, with special emphasis on reading; instruction in these skills and strategies should be incorporated into general education classes; and, most importantly, these skills and strategies should be taught earlier than the high school years.

Two interesting items of feedback included that parents attached value to self-contained special education classes for difficult required subject-area courses and that they did not always appreciate that teachers expressed to students what the parents perceived to be unrealistic expectations that the students would and should go to college.

Another item of interest was the strong role that the parents involved in the urban focus group played as advocates for their children in maintaining student records, personally taking records to new schools when the family moved, and setting up meetings with teachers to let them know that their students had a disability. Although only five parents from the urban setting participated, and all were volunteers, this finding raises topics of future research regarding the roles of urban parents as advocates for their children.

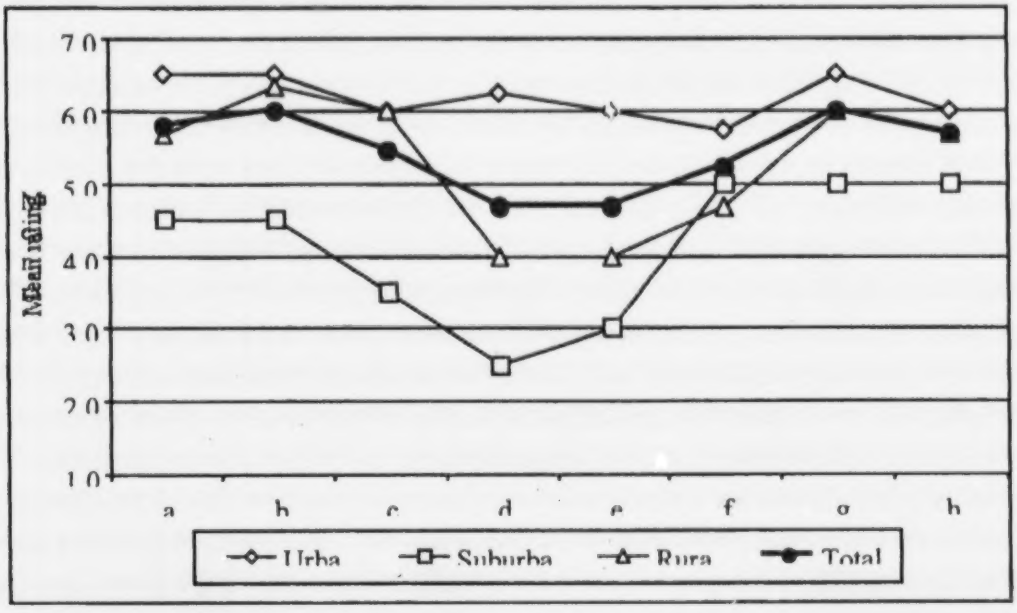
The participating parents of urban students gave mean satisfaction ratings that were consistently higher than those given by the parents of rural and suburban students. Of the 54 items on the satisfaction form, 34 (63%) were awarded a rating of 5.5 or higher by these parents. Suburban parents gave a mean rating of at least 5.5 to only six (11%) of the 54 items. Four of these six items were in the section targeting their satisfaction with their relationship with school staff. Rural parents gave a mean rating of 5.5 or greater to nine (16.7%) of the 54 items. Six of the nine items were in the section that focused on satisfaction with special education teachers and their interactions with their child. The other three were in the section targeting their satisfaction with their relationship with school staff.

These findings must, of course, be tempered by the fact that few parents participated, and those who did were paid. The parents who took time to attend the meetings were likely to be those most involved in their students' education and who had strong opinions.

In conclusion, differences in satisfaction and opinions seemed to exist among the urban, rural, and suburban parents in this study. Considering all ten parents' responses together masks those differences. For example, the urban parents were, on average, more satisfied with their

child's education. The rural parents awarded lower average ratings to more items than either of the other two parent groups. Whether these differences actually relate to the locale of the schools or whether they just relate to the differences among the educational programs within the schools is unclear.

Figure 1: Parent satisfaction with interactions with special education teachers (Questions 1a-



Questions 1a-1h

In this section please tell us about your satisfaction with the special
How satisfied are you with the way your child's special education

a. Involve your child in making decisions about his/her

b. Involve you in making decisions about your child's

c. Help your child plan what required academic classes (science, history, English, math) to

d. Meet your child's needs as a

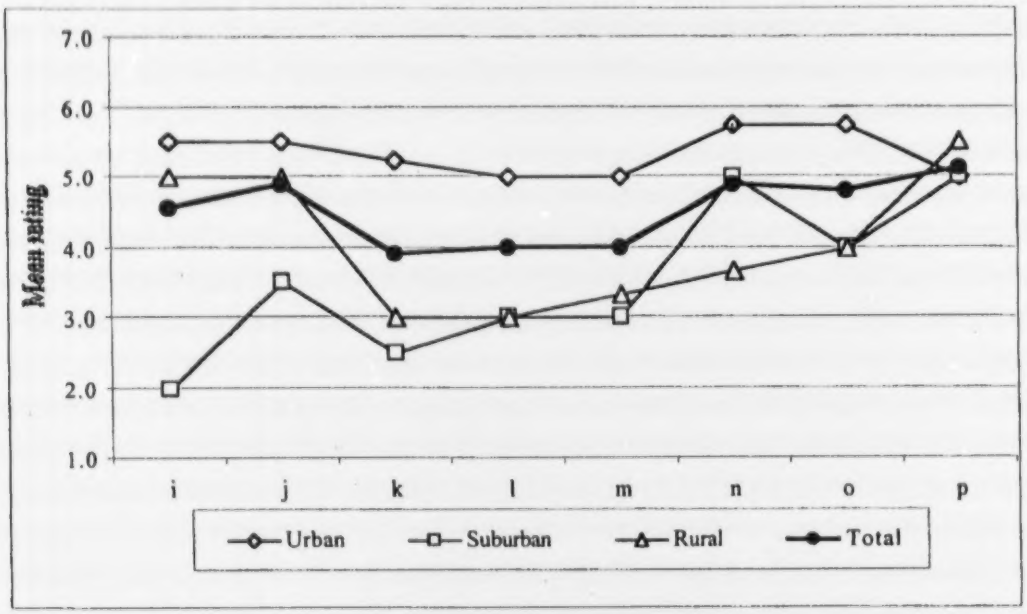
e. Teach your child the skills and strategies needed to succeed in required academic

f. Help your child set and reach

g. Tell your child what he/she has done

h. Tell your child what he/she needs to

Figure 2. Parent satisfaction with interactions with special education teachers (Question 1i-1p).



Questions 1i-1p

In this section, please tell us about your satisfaction with the special education teachers.
How satisfied are you with the way your child's special education teachers:

i. Help your child complete assignments for required academic classes?

j. Help your child study for tests in required academic classes?

k. Help your child earn good grades (Cs or above)?

l. Help your child deal with personal problems?

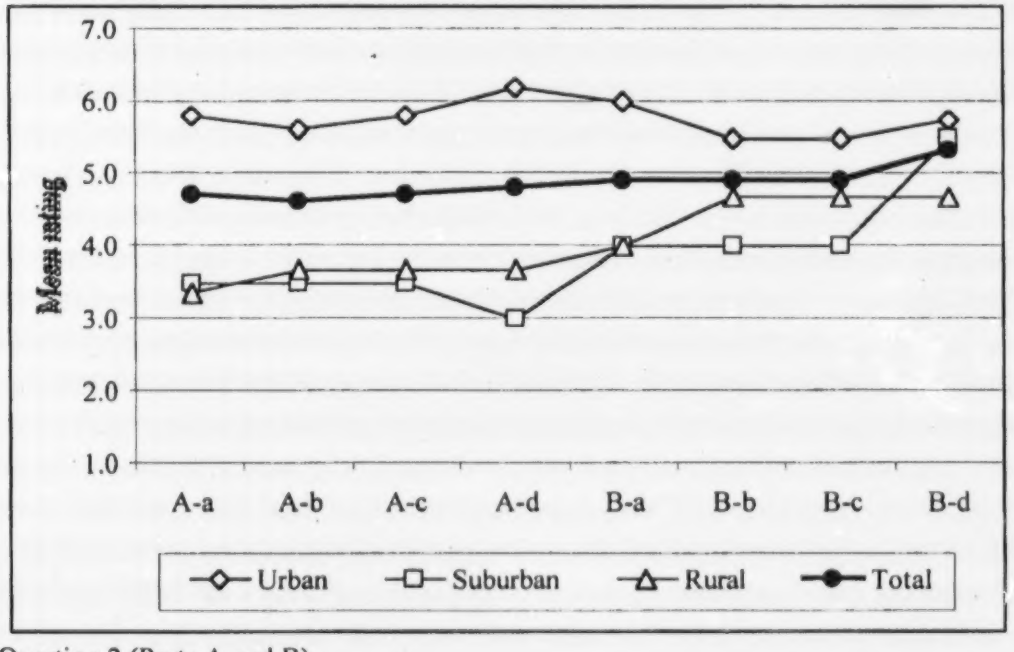
m. Help your child deal with problems in required academic classes?

n. Show concern about your child as a person?

o. Are prepared every day to teach your child?

p. Choose books and materials that help your child learn?

Figure 3: Parent satisfaction with the communication and cooperation of their child's teachers (Questions 2A, items a-d, and 2B, items a-d).



Question 2 (Parts A and B)

Part A: In this section please tell us about your experiences with your child's teachers of required academic classes. How satisfied are you with:

a. The way your child's teachers report your child's progress to you in required academic classes?

b. The frequency of the reports you receive from the teachers of the required classes?

c. The information that the teachers report to you about your child?

d. The cooperation between your child's teachers and you?

Part B: In this section please tell us about your experiences with your child's special education teachers. How satisfied are you with:

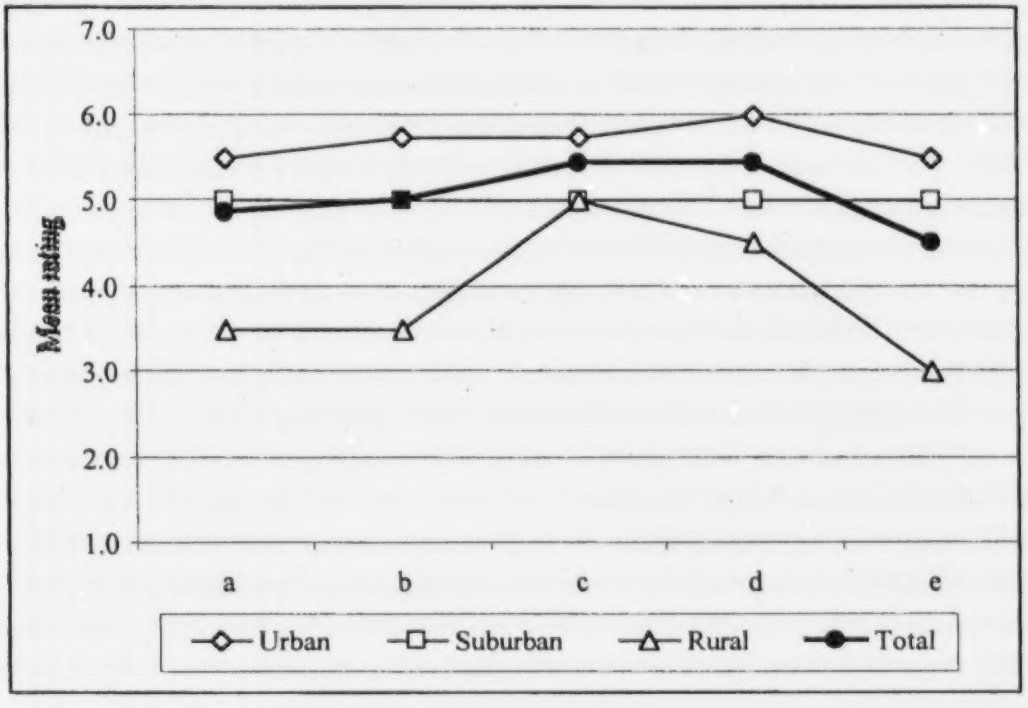
a. The way your child's teachers report your child's progress to you in required academic classes?

b. The frequency of the reports you receive from the special education teachers of the required classes?

c. The information that the special education teachers report to you about your child?

d. The cooperation between your child's special education teachers and you?

Figure 4: Parent satisfaction with special education teacher's preparation of their student for the future (Question 3a-3e).



Question 3

In this section, please tell us about your satisfaction with the way your child's special education teachers are helping your child prepare for life after high school graduation. How satisfied are you with the way teachers:

a. Teach your child new skills and strategies that will help him/her do well in future schooling?

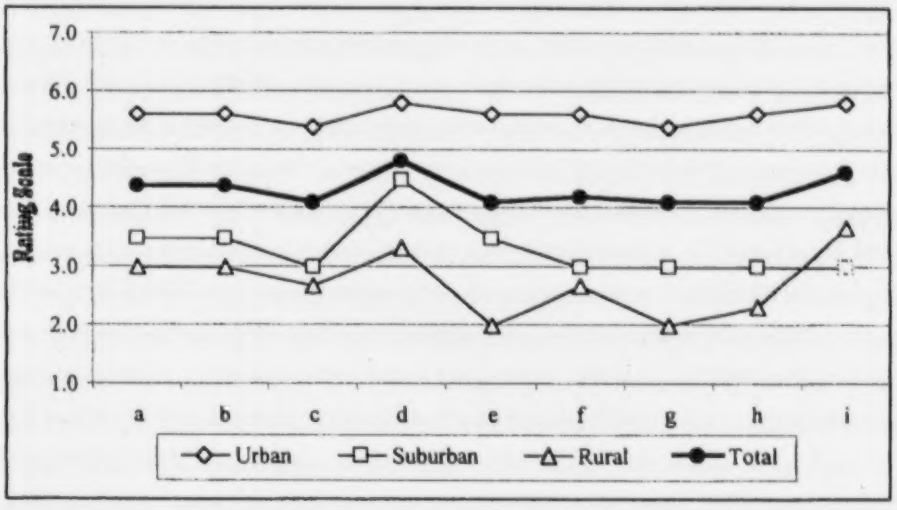
b. Teach your child new skills and strategies that will help him/her do well in future jobs?

c. Help your child think about jobs or career choices when he/she finishes high school?

d. Help your child think about future training or education when he/she finishes high school?

e. Help your child be ready to be a "life-long learner"?

Figure 5: Parent satisfaction with the way teachers of required academic classes help their students (Question 4a-4i).



Question 4

In this section, please tell us about your satisfaction with the teachers of your child's academic classes (science, history, math, English). How satisfied are you with the way that these teachers:

a. Consider your child's learning needs?

b. Prepare for class in a manner that enhances your child's performance?

c. Teach in a manner that enhances your child's performance?

d. Choose books and materials that enhance your child's performance?

e. Change their instruction in a manner that helps your child learn?

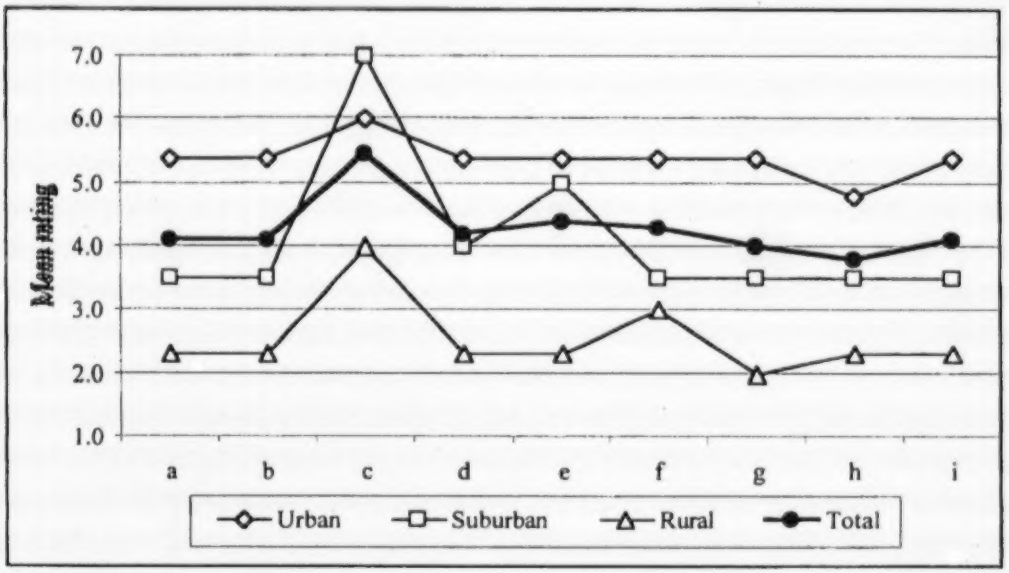
f. Use computers or other machines to help your child learn?

g. Help your child with personal problems?

h. Help your child with problems that he/she is having in their classes?

i. Show concern for your child as a person?

Figure 6: Parent satisfaction with their students' participation in required academic courses (Question 5a-5i).



Question 5

In this section, please consider your child's participation in required classes (science, history, English, math, etc.). How satisfied are you with:

a. Your child's attitude about learning in those classes?

b. Your child's comfort in those classes?

c. Your child's acceptance by the other students in the classes?

d. The success of your child in learning new information in those classes?

e. The success of your child in learning new skills in those classes?

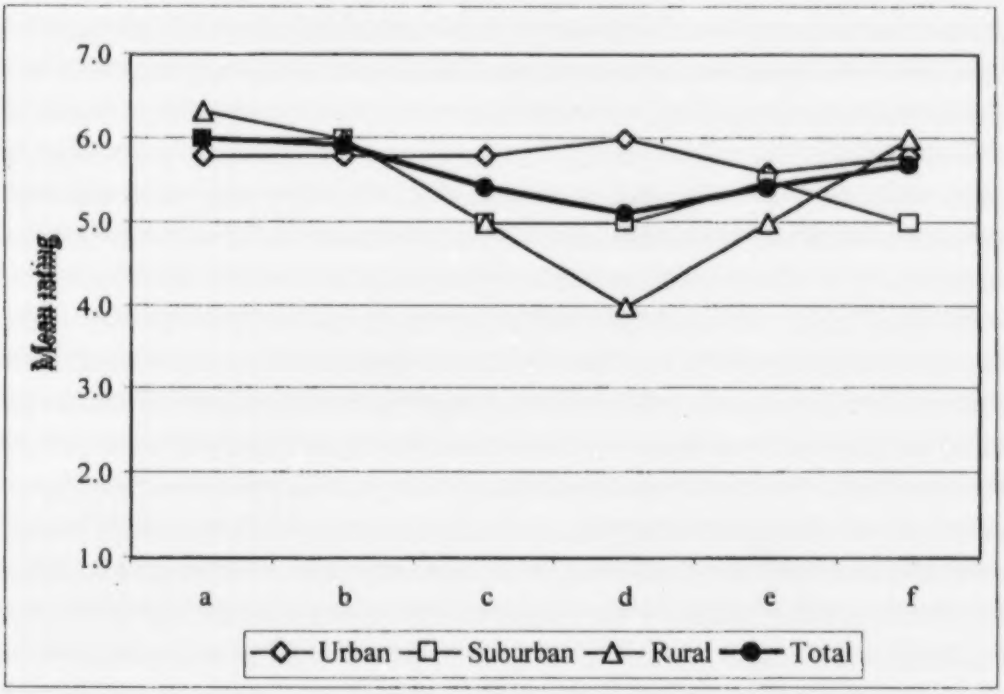
f. The gains your child is making as a learner?

g. The grades that your child is earning in those classes?

h. The progress that your child is making toward meeting state standards?

i. The progress that your child is making toward graduation?

Figure 7: Parent satisfaction with their relationship with the school staff (Question 6a-6f).



Question 6

In this section, please consider your relationship with the school staff. How satisfied are you:

a. That you know with whom to talk if your son/daughter has a school problem?

b. That you would know what to say and do if your son/daughter has a school problem?

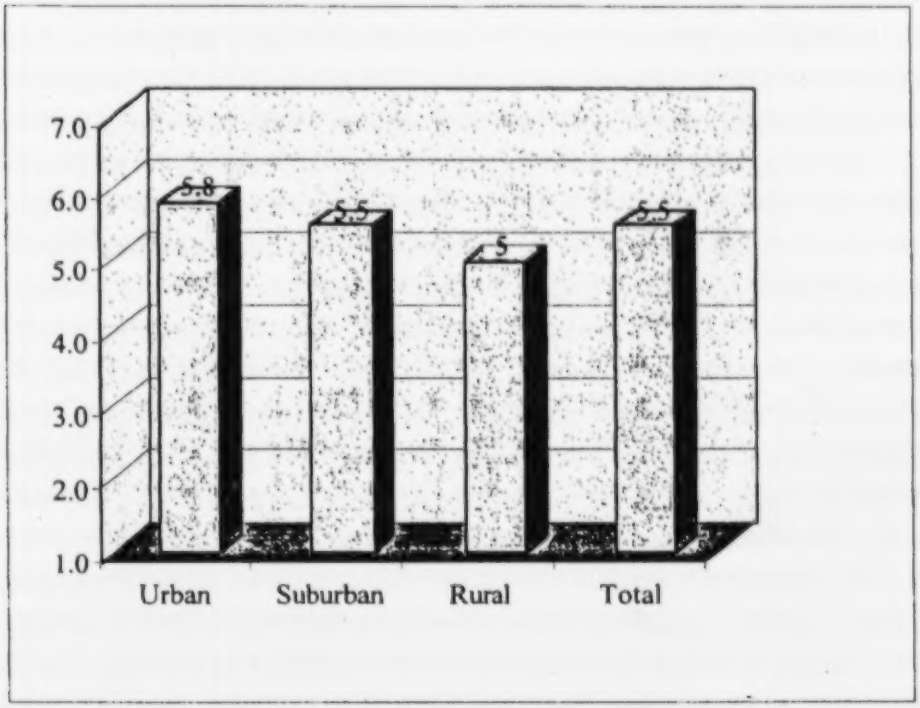
c. With your comfort in talking with school staff about your son/daughter?

d. That something positive and effective will be done if you bring a problem to the staff's attention?

e. That the school staff will treat you with respect and seriously listen to your concerns?

f. That you can help your son/daughter succeed in school by working with school staff?

Figure 8: Parent indication of involvement as an advocate for their student on educational issues (Question 7).



Question 7

How much do you agree with the statement, "I personally have become an advocate for my son/daughter on educational issues."?

1 Completely disagree

2 Disagree

3 Slightly disagree

4 Neither agree nor disagree

5 Slightly agree

6 Agree

7 Completely agree

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